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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [PHUM](#) [SO](#) [YE](#)

SUBJECT: SOMALIA: YEMEN READY TO RECEIVE SHEIKH SHARIF, BUT
KEEP HIM UNDER TIGHT CONTROL

REF: SANAA 138

Classified By: AMBASSADOR THOMAS C. KRAJESKI FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)
) .

¶1. (C) Ambassador called on Yemeni FM Abu Bakr al-Qirbi on February 4 in order to deliver reftel demarche points, to which Qirbi replied that the Republic of Yemen Government (ROYG) continues to urge the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) to conduct an inclusive political dialogue. He said that President Saleh's "pragmatic" advice not to "rush into dialogue with former Council of Islamic Courts (CIC) members" remains valid (reftel), but that pressing former CIC and other moderates into dialogue is a "win-win situation" because it would "expose who is truly willing to participate in re-building Somalia and who is just telling us what we want to hear because they have been defeated."

¶2. (C) Qirbi also said that the ROYG continues to encourage former CIC leader Sheikh Sharif to re-locate from Kenya to Yemen, but that TFG President Abdullahi Yusuf has asked the Government of Kenya to block his movement. According to Qirbi, Yusuf was upset by Sharif's comments to the BBC insisting that he would continue to oppose the Ethiopian occupation forces and the TFG.

¶3. (C) Qirbi stated that Sharif's comments only reinforced the ROYG's desire to have Sharif accept its offer to come to Yemen. If Sharif came to Yemen, the ROYG would closely monitor him and ensure that "none of his activities do anything to harm peace and security in Somalia," and would seek to convince him to take part in a national reconciliation process. If, on the other hand, Sharif were allowed to travel elsewhere, he could end up in Eritrea or Libya, and "these governments would use Sharif for their own agendas" to harm the chances for stability in Somalia.

¶4. (C) Qirbi said he had asked his ambassador in Mogadishu to arrange a telephone call between him and President Yusuf in order to ask Yusuf to authorize Sharif's transfer to Yemen. The FM noted that there had been some speculation about the idea of the Kenyans sending Sharif back to Somalia, but Qirbi advised that "this would create a big problem for the TFG, because if they arrest and prosecute him, that would ignite the Islamist groups." Qirbi promised to provide Ambassador with an update should he learn more about Sharif's travel plans.

¶5. (U) NOTE: Foreign and local media outlets have been speculating for more than a week on Sharif's possible arrival

in Yemen, with both Deutsche Presse Agency and the Yemeni Ministry of Defense-controlled "26 September" quoting sources as saying that Sharif would arrive in Yemen as early as February 5.
KRAJESKI